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ABSTRACT

To study any social movement is ultimately to examine an intricate social drama. With the publication of "The Jungle" in 1906, Upton Sinclair emerged from the stormy background of the muckraking movement to become one of that movement's principal actors. But in the 1920s, long after the Progressive reformers dusted and put away their muckrakers for other pursuits, Sinclair raked with indomitable zeal and enthusiasm. From 1918 to 1927, Sinclair created a remarkable series of muckraking tracts. Collectively called "The Dead Hand" series, it has been called one of the first thematic analyses of culture from the socialist perspective. Writing during a time of widespread disillusionment with American progressive reform, Sinclair championed the muckrakers' movement. But so cataclysmic were the effects of World War I and its aftermath that the fires of reform movements had been virtually extinguished. In the 1920s Sinclair was almost alone in the role of radical American social critic. It was not until the 1970s that historians and critics noted the historical and intellectual significance of "The Dead Hand" series. Critics suggest it is indeed unfortunate that eminent historians ignored Sinclair's preservation of the muckraking tradition. "The Dead Hand" series can be seen as a "rhetorica in vacuuo" which ultimately failed in its purposes for historical, rhetorical, and personal reasons. (Forty-one notes are included.) (Author/SG)

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# Counting the Cats of Zanzibar: Upton Sinclair and the Decline of the Muckraking Movement.

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## ABSTRACT

To study any social movement is ultimately to examine an intricate social drama. With the publication of The Jungle in 1906, Upton Sinclair emerged from the stormy background of the muckraking movement to become one of that movement's principal actors. But in the 1920's, long after the Progressive reformers dusted and put away their muckrakes for other pursuits, Sinclair raked with indomitable zeal and enthusiasm. From 1918 until 1927, Sinclair created a remarkable series of muckraking tracts. Collectively called The Dead Hand series, it has been called one of the first thematic analyses of culture from the socialist perspective.

Writing during a time of wide-spread disillusionment with American progressive reform, Sinclair championed the muckraker's movement. But so cataclysmic were the effects of World War I and its aftermath that the fires of reform movements had been virtually extinguished. In the 1920's Sinclair was almost alone in the role of radical American social critic. It was not until the 1970's that historians and critics noted the historical and intellectual significance of The Dead Hand series.

It is indeed unfortunate, Lewis Fretz writes, "that eminent [American] historians of the 1920's have focused on H.L. Mencken's cynical sniping at Babbittry and the 'booboisie' while completely ignoring Sinclair's preservation of the muckraking tradition."

My paper will attempt to explain Sinclair's series as a rhetorica in vacuuo, a rhetoric which ultimately failed of its purposes for historical, rhetorical, and personal reasons.

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Among all the inevitable requirements for the doctor of philosophy degree, none is more vexing than the requirement to prepare and defend an appropriate dissertation. After the first rush of graduate school excitement wore off, I recognized the problem: what would I write about? What territory could I stake out as mine and mine alone? This task is something like finding a proper spouse — find a topic to love, honor, cherish, in sickness and in health. Further, because the quality of one's professional research career reflects the eminence and rigor of one's dissertation after the Ph. D. degree is conferred, one's dissertation and one's later professional career become inextricably linked: "Till death do us part" is therefore not too far from the truth.

Completing most of the doctoral course work, seminars , and examinations, and not coming up with a satisfactory dissertation topic is tantamount to overstaying one's welcome in graduate school. So, while, sitting in a seminar on persuasion in 1971, musing around for something to write to fulfill the requirements of the seminar, I decided to begin a tentative search for a topic by writing about the rhetoric of the protest novel. That is, I had long had an interest in how works of fiction persuade their audience, how authors created and project believable situations and characters upon their audiences. I had hoped that this interest would evolve into something I could write about , something I would enjoy , something by which I could earn my degree.

On my bookshelf was a dogged-eared copy of Upton Sinclair's The Jungle. Armed with such a fitting object for my rhetorical investigation, I proceeded to write a paper on the major strategies Sinclair used in that novel to persuade his 1906 audience of the dangers of the meat-packing industry and the need for social justice.

While preparing that paper I read both of Sinclair's autobiographies in which I discovered Sinclair's startling claim that The Jungle was a misunderstood book, not for him a muckraking book at all. Sinclair's avowed purpose in The Jungle was to gain converts to the socialist cause, not to improve the meat-packing industry. "I aimed at the public's heart," he cried, "and by accident I hit it in the stomach!" His real contribution to

the muckraking movement, he argued, was not The Jungle but his series of books collectively called The Dead Hand series.

Granville Hicks called his six volume Dead Hand series "muckraking at its best" [1] In it , Sinclair depicts and indicts capitalism as a predatory, malicious economic system because, in Sinclair's view, the system exploits the wage earners for the benefit of the capitalist owners of production. The American people in particular, Sinclair argues, are insidiously manipulated by ruthless forces endemic to capitalism.

Armed with these insights, I ransacked Northwestern University's Deering Library for The Dead Hand series. I found them and eagerly read all of them. Then a rather curious insight: if these books were so important to the muckraking movement, if these books were as significant to Sinclair's career as Sinclair said they were, why had they largely failed of their purpose? Except for The Brass Check, which had sold relatively well, none of the other five volumes had been critically well received or even cursorily noted by scholars of the muckraking movement. In 1970, one critic of Sinclair suggested that it is indeed unfortunate that "eminent [American] historians of the 1920's have focussed on H.L. Mencken's cynical snipping at babbitry and the 'booboisie' while completely ignoring Sinclair's preservation of the muckraking tradition" [2]

Further, judging from the library cards on each volume of the series, no one at Northwestern had checked any of them out in forty years. It seemed that not one student in recent memory had even been motivated to read any of them! Thus, not only had The Dead Hand series failed to strike a response chord in the 1920's with Sinclair's intended audience, the series seemed not to have found much of an audience at all.. What can be learned, I wondered, from studying a *rhetorica in vacuuo* , a rhetor without a hearer, a sermon delivered in an empty church, a communication system bereft of an audience? My dissertation topic was slowly emerging.

One of my major professors, Professor Leland M. Griffin, published a landmark study in the April, 1952 edition of The Quarterly Journal of Speech. Called "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," Griffin concluded that the chief business of the rhetorical scholar was not necessarily studying

the "great man speaking well," nor even the great moments of rhetorical history. Rather, he suggested, regardless of a rhetor's success or failure, an examination of the rhetor's efforts may still be of significance. "As students of persuasion," he writes, " interested not so much in the accomplished change of opinion as in the attempt to effectuate change, we should find the rhetorical structure of the lost cause as meaningful as that of the cause victorious." [3]

Many years later, Griffin reaffirmed his earlier claim that the chief business of the rhetorical scholar, "is the study of rhetoric and rhetorics and the analysis of failure may be as rewarding as of success. If no more than a single rhetor rises up and says No in the name of a movement, if his hearers are few and his efforts come to nothing, I would suggest that his movement might still deserve study . . . . For here again is a form of rhetorical striving, and it is the study of such striving that remains the chief good and market of our time." [4] Clearly, I had my dissertation topic: a rhetorical examination of Upton Sinclair's The Dead Hand series.

In The Dead Hand series, Sinclair presents a world of interlocking directorates and monopolies, of world wars and revolutions for the control of power and wealth. Standing inside what he considered the dying empire of capitalism, believing himself a chronicler of its last days, Sinclair envisions his task in The Dead Hand series as the freeing of the American world from economic oppression by exposing the contradictions of the economic system. To Sinclair, the establishment of capitalism as an economic system is the great enemy of people, corrupting not only social institutions but the very character of the human spirit. Further, Sinclair believed in the imminent collapse of capitalism; when that power of capitalism is broken, he writes, we shall see the dead hand of capitalism "crumble into dust, as a mummy crumbles when it is exposed to the air." [5]

And expose it he did. The Profits of Religion [1918], first in the series, is a study of established religions "as a source of income and a shield to privilege." The Brass Check [1920], the next volume, sold over 150,000 copies in its first year of publication; in it, Sinclair argues that the modern American newspaper is "a gigantic munition factory in which the propertied class manufactures mental bombs and gas shells for the annihilation of its

enemies." The function of the American press, he maintains, is to safeguard the interests of property and extend the influence of the propertied class. The Goose-step [1923] and The Goslings [1924] were written to expose how the invisible government of Big Business owns and operates the American school. The Goose-step examines colleges and universities; The Goslings examines elementary and secondary schools. Mammonart [1925], fifth volume in the series, surveys the relationship between artistic achievement and artistic environments, concluding that successful artists are those who aggrandize and extol the virtues of the ruling classes; art for Sinclair is usually " an instrument of propaganda and repression employed by the ruling classes of the community." Money Writes! [1927] is the concluding volume. In it, Sinclair returns to the subject he knows best: the condition of current American literature. Because of economic exploitation, he writes, most contemporary writers are pessimistic and degenerate. They live in a world, he argues, "from which truth telling and heroism have been banished by official decree and there is nothing left but to jeer and die." [6] Sinclair, the inveterate muckraker, chose to do neither.

This series is unique in the history of American letters, not only because of Sinclair's single-mindedness of purpose but because the series best demonstrates the undiluted, idealistic American muckraker/reformer. Here is Sinclair, filled with the spirit of righteousness, armed with a vision of the world to win over for the cooperative socialist commonwealth that was to be. Long after the earlier reformers had discarded their muckrakes, Sinclair continued to assault the most prominent capitalist institutions, informing whomever read the series of the irresponsibilities and shortcomings of organized religions, newspapers, the schools, art, literature, and economics. While the citadels of American capitalism remained immune and largely invulnerable to the charges Sinclair levied against them, in writing this muckraking series of books, Sinclair performed an invaluable service by persistently and methodically exposing the more flagrant abuses caused by capitalist control of American institutions. Other leftist critics had often complained of the nefarious effects caused by a capitalist elite. But only Sinclair comprehensively studied and documented these charges .[7] Although the series failed to rally a wide audience, even though his hearers were few and his effects slight, the charges Sinclair made could not easily be dismissed. Though we might scoff at Sinclair's

socialist theories, one critic observed, "we must, at all events, think and think deeply." [8]

Indifferent to the rampant materialism of the Harding-Coolidge era, Sinclair raked with indomitable zeal and vigor. He never lost faith in the American people's ability to correct an injustice once that injustice had been brought to their attention. And Sinclair never tired of bringing attention to these injustices. For Sinclair assumed that everywhere, at last freed by Sinclair's "truth," the series would cause people to rebel against the dead hand of capitalism.

Although no rebellion ever took place, Sinclair's series was a potent educative force and a dominant influence in developing converts to the socialist cause. Betty Yorburg contends that the numerous writing of Sinclair for many people "started the process of active or deliberative political self-identification." [9]

While many critics dismissed or -- worse -- ignored Sinclair, few offered many explanations for Sinclair's lack of rhetorical success. I believe there were two : the historical factors in general about which Sinclair had no control including the absence of a specifically appropriate rhetorical movement to which he could respond; secondly, his unfortunate reputation as an eccentric. It is to that task that this study now turns.

## Historical Factors

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the American of the mauve generation, the robber baron and the great barbecue was long overdue for a thorough civic, social and political housecleaning. During the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, there arose what one critic aptly calls the "preachers of social discontent," [10] more commonly referred to as the muckrakers.

Their performance was exhilarating. For a brief period, writes Harvey Swados, "an extraordinarly keen group of editors and publishers made common cause with some of the nation's outstanding novelists, poets, historians, lawyers, economists and researcher. The cause, which changed

the course of history, was the exposure of the underside of American capitalism." [11]

With the publication of The Jungle in 1906, Upton Sinclair emerged as one of the significant leaders of the muckraking movement. Whatever else he was to become . . . politician, propagandist, novelist, historian, journalist, poet, playwright, publisher. . . the most popular and perhaps most fitting sobriquet one could attach to him is "muckraker." Newsweek magazine, in its obituary of Sinclair, summed up Sinclair's life and career by describing him as "King of the Muckrakers." [12]

However, if one compared Sinclair's rhetorical strategies used in The Dead Hand series against the broader background of the earlier muckraking era, differences as well as similarities appear. For example, all of the muckrakers shared a concern for the moral, economic, and physical well-being of the country and felt an urgent need to alert the American people to what had gone wrong and what might be necessary to put things right again. Unlike Sinclair, however, few of the muckrakers ever threatened the foundations of American society. Few of them were sympathetic to the aims of the Socialist Party. For them, the solution to the problems of American democracy was not socialism but more democracy. Though American socialists such as Gustavus Myers, Charles Edward Russell , and Sinclair gravitated towards the muckraking movement, the most persuasive and respected members of the movement were middle-class reformers defending traditional American ideals and values, and the essential soundness of the American character.

Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, and Lincoln Steffens, hailed as the greatest journalist triumvirate in the muckraking movement, were far from radical. While their analysis, so vigorously presented in McClure's magazine, did indeed disturb the character and complacency of a contented nation, never did they advocate socialism or attack the American capitalist system. Their faith and optimism, Linda Beltz argues , "made them unwilling to admit that the evil uncovered in the social order meant that democracy was a failure or that radical changes in the status quo were called for. " [13]

Because Sinclair was a radical crusader, not a practical, middle-class American reformer, he shared the fate of the majority of American socialists, who, as Daniel Bell argues, were never a major voice in the history of American reform, who played minor accompaniment in the great symphony for reform. Most all of them were incapable of sustained action because most of them were utopian prophets rather than practical politicians. Bell contends, for example, that the socialists stood on the mountain like signposts. The socialist reformer "points out but cannot go, for if he did" Bell writes, "no longer would there be a sign. The politician, one might add, carries the sign into the valley with him." [14] Only the sure promise of victory held together the discordant elements of the American Socialist party. Without that victory for the socialist cause , Sinclair shared the same political fate as the other socialists : political impotence and isolation.

In addition, The Dead Hand series was unsuccessful as a vehicle for reform because muckraking ceased as an active force in American life as a result of public indifference. Having been a potent force for over a decade, having been instrumental in the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act , the progressive income tax, right-to-work legislation, and many other reforms, by 1914, the excitement and energies for the muckraker's cause had run down. Worse, the great war delivered a fatal blow to the muckraking movement by diverting the attention of the American people away from the literature of exposure. Those who, like Sinclair, succeeded the muckraking movement were ineffective. Sinclair in particular was so inextricably wedded to the peculiar, American socialist gospel that he shared the fate of the socialist's cause.

The harshest but perhaps truest thing that could be said of the latter-day muckrakers -- those who raked after 1914 -- is, in Louis Filler's phrase, that "they were insects of the great wheel of events who persuaded themselves that they were turning it." [15]

Thus, Sinclair's Dead Hand series, emerging on the American scene so late in the life of the muckraking movement, after the energies of reform had been dissipated and the forces of Progressive reform had become but faded memories, was a sermon preached to a near empty church. As

Kenneth Burke observes, "you can't get a fully socialist act unless you have a fully socialist scene." [16]

## Historical Factors and the Rhetorical Movement

The muckraking movement in the United States was truly extraordinary in terms of its rhetorical successes. Finding injustices such as corruption in business, finance, government, the venality of the trusts, the horrors of working conditions and legions of other social abuses, the muckrakers laid the causes of that corruption on the doorsteps of big business, in Parrington's words, "like a bastard on the doorstep of the father." [17] Truly, a movement to be reckoned with.

Unlike speeches whose analysis involves examining the unique responses speakers and audience make to each other under specific communication conditions, rhetorical movement studies require an examination of an entire communication system, tracing the symbolic processes and resonances caused by people becoming dissatisfied with some part of their environment, when change is desired and collectively acted upon and when eventually their mass efforts result in success or failure. [18]

Like any rhetorical movement, the muckraking movement can be described as a peculiar configuration of rhetorical forces (speeches, poems, plays, cartoons, writers, journalists, audiences, etc) which express a shared ideology and a shared rhetorical strategies, and, again , like any other social movement, share the essential attribute, "of a dialectical tension growing out of moral conflict "[19] For example, women who collectively demand equal pay for equal work, the poor collectively demanding open housing legislation, masses of people giving of their time and efforts to save wilderness, are expressing a moral conflict through rhetorical movement identity.

Stewart, Smith and Denton[20] suggest that while each social movement has to confront unique rhetorical variables such as multiple acts, purposes, agents, agencies, audiences, opposition and so forth, it is useful to think of social movements as developing in five reasonably discrete stages: Genesis, characterized by the nurturing of a social imperfection in

the existing order; Period of Social Unrest , characterized by developing a movement identity and ideology, attracting agitators and provoking opposition; Period of Enthusiastic Mobilization, characterized by a movement populated with "true believers," of attracting prominent converts to the movement's cause, of visibly gaining legitimacy as well as victories; the Maintenance Period, characterized by a decline in movement membership, a consolidation of gains rather than an impetus to new victories, of incessant fund-raising and the creation of a bureaucracy; finally, social movements enter into senescence, known as the Period of Termination in which the movement ceases to be a motor force, can no longer mobilize its forces in a dramatic way, when its various publics become indifferent to the movement's cause, when rhetorical muscles are aching. [21]

Like any rhetorical movement, the muckraking movement developed its own life cycle. According to the Weinbergs , [22] muckraking as a movement began in 1902, took a sensational turn in 1905 - 1906 (due largely to Sinclair's The Jungle and David Graham Phillips ' The Treason of the Senate) began its decline in 1908 and merged with the Progressive movement in 1912. The heyday of the muckrakers, to quote the Weinbergs "ran almost parallel to Theodore Roosevelt's term of as President of the United States." [23]

Movements , thus, enter their termination phase, according to Stewart, Smith and Denton, when the movement's promises are no longer being fulfilled, when the movement has to consolidate its gains rather than mount a campaign for more victories, when many of its able advocates abandon the rhetorical activities needed to sustain the movement , when the movement's audiences lose interest. [24] It is evident that The Dead Hand series was written during the decline of the muckraking movement.

Sinclair virtually acknowledges his political and rhetorical isolation in The Brass Check, published in 1920. For twenty years, he wrote , he had been a voice "crying in the wilderness of industrial America; pleading for kindness to our laboring-classes, so that they might chose the path wisely, and move by peaceful steps into the new industrial order. I have seen my pleas ignored and my influence destroyed, and now I see the stubborn

pride and insane avarice of our money-masters driving us straight to the precipice of revolution. . . . What shall I do? What can I do save to cry out one last warning in this last fateful hour?" [25]

In the fateful hours of the 1920's, the rhetorical situation which presented itself to any of the American reformers was, to say the least, unpromising and inhibitive. The American Socialist Party as well as the remnants of the Roosevelt Progressives had been shattered by the war. The America of 1920 was a triumph of conservatism: business and America had made a profitable combination . The wizened forces of reform were destined to remain undernourished until the economic holocaust of 1929 and the depression of the 1930's.

The Dead Hand series is thus a product of political and rhetorical isolation. By the end of the war, disillusioned by President Wilson and "the war to end all wars," upbraided by the members of the American Socialist Party, Sinclair wrote The Dead Hand series as an attempt to make a public commitment, a re-affirmation of idealism, an attempted re-kindling of the Progressive zeal Sinclair had and the country had exhibited earlier. By 1918, the Progressive fires seemed to have been permanently extinguished: muckraking was no longer popular and Sinclair's audience had vanished.[26]

However, it needs to be pointed out that, although Sinclair's personal odyssey gained for him the reputation of a crank and eccentric, and that his muckraking efforts went virtually unnoticed, most other social reformers found themselves on an odyssey of defeat as well.

The entire historical framework during which Sinclair wrote The Dead Hand series was marked by what Eric Goldman called a reconquest of the American mind by conservatism. Congress in the 1920's passed much pro-corporation legislation; the courts re-interpreted the New Freedoms laws of the Wilson administration in such a way as to harass the labor movement and foster a new era of trust building. The army of reformers so conspicuous before the great war were, by the 1920's in Goldman's phrase, "a beaten army, muscles aching, its ranks thoroughly depleted."[27] The remnants of the earlier muckraking movement found their only political outlet in the third party efforts of Eugene Debs in 1920 and Senator Robert

La Follette in the campaign of 1924. Seven months after that campaign, La Follette was dead and with him died much of the impetus for reform. A social reformer in the 1920's had become, in Goldman's words, "a nagging aunt unwanted in the cozy rendezvous of business and America." [28]

But Sinclair was not one who lost his faith easily; indeed, he was a man who found solace in defeat as other did in victory. Throughout his long, reforming career, Sinclair argued that prophets like himself are usually scorned in their own land.

Often, they are. Social reform has a habit of being an object of scorn. "Reform is a morning glory, " a contemporary investigative reporter observed . Likewise muckraking. "We rake a little muck, and move on; the money boys stay." [29] Prophets like Sinclair must content themselves with the "inner knowledge of a service rendered to the race." [30] Sinclair is fond of Goethe's admonition: the heavenly powers are revealed only to those who have eaten their bread with tears.

## Personal Failures

There can be no doubt that The Jungle catapulted Sinclair into a leadership position in the muckraking movement. The New York Evening World [31] said of The Jungle: "Not since Byron awoke one morning to find himself famous has there been such an example of world-wide celebrity won in a day by a book as has come to Upton Sinclair." Jack London called it "the Uncle Tom's Cabin of wage-slavery."[32] And Sinclair is right in asserting that The Jungle articulated the anguish and misery of the inarticulate immigrant workers of Chicago's Stockyards.

But, within four years after he had written The Jungle, Sinclair had lost the audience that the novel had won. There are several reasons for his sudden obscurity. His devotion to socialist causes sapped much of his energy. Further, he often undertook very demanding lecture tours and speaking engagements. Finally, by 1910, Sinclair had earned the reputation of an eccentric. Even his most friendly critics must admit that that reputation is at least partly justified.

In an article entitled "Perfect Health," published in Cosmopolitan in 1910 . Sinclair announced, with perfect candor, that he had discovered a cure for all human diseases with the possible exception of tuberculosis. The cure was fasting, "the secret of perfect and permanent health . . . It is Nature's safety valve, an automatic protection against disease." [33] He further argued that he was living proof that perfect health is attainable. I shall continue to have perfect health, he argued, "just as long as I stand by my present resolve, which is to fast at the slightest symptom of being ill — a cold or a headache, a feeling of depression, or a coated tongue, or a scratch on the finger which does not heal quickly."[34]

Articles such as "Perfect Health" damaged Sinclair's reputation as a serious reformer almost beyond repair. Of this period in his life, Arnold Biella writes , Sinclair

> fell easily into the classification of a crank and faddist . He was eccentric. He traveled from one cooperative colony to another. He lived on "squirrel food," or wheat or vegetables. The rank and file of the socialist movement could no longer take him seriously; it was nonsense to recommend the fast to people who seldom had enough to eat. He was appealing instead to those members of the middle-class who could afford to experiment with cures; the great body of the middle class found it easy to ignore him. Obviously, a sensible man could discount Sinclair as a serious writer. [35]

Four years later, Sinclair authored an article for Heart's Magazine called "The Laying on of Hands." [36] in which he argued that he had the power of relieving pain through mental telepathy. Sinclair also developed an intense interest in telepathy, clairvoyance and telekinesis, befriending mediums and spiritualists of all sorts.

Finally, Sinclair created something of a sensation when, in 1922, he advocated yet another spectacular route to perfect health. Dr. Albert Abrams, a San Francisco physician, asserted that he had developed a method of diagnosing and treating diseases based upon the measuring of

electronic reactions in human blood. Convincing Sinclair of the efficacy of his methods, Dr. Abrams found a firm advocate.

Based upon his various theories, Dr. Abrams constructed a vibration detector machine. By the simple means of inserting a subject's blood specimen, Dr. Abrams claimed he could thus determine the disease with which the subject had become infected.

While observing Dr. Abrams, Sinclair was ecstatic. His ecstasy took the form of a vision in which all people were forever freed of all disease; "I speak the literal truth when I say that after I had sat for a week in Abrams' clinic, I had lost all feeling of the horror of the three dread diseases: tuberculosis, syphilis, and cancer."[37] Characteristically, Sinclair now felt himself equipped with a new savior for the world. He set out to convince a skeptical America of the marvels of Dr. Abrams' discoveries. He wrote an article for Pearson's magazine entitled "House of Wonder," which created a sensation.[38] The American Medical Association denounced Dr. Abrams' discoveries as frauds and declared Sinclair a dolt suffering from an incurable case of credulity.

Sinclair's reputation as a serious thinker and reformer had eclipsed as meteorically as it had risen. Most of his early novels had been relegated to instant obscurity, Moreover, The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature does not index any of Sinclair's writings for its 1915 - 1918 volume, although the indomitable Sinclair was writing as much as ever. [39] It was not until Sinclair published Oil! in 1927 that he would enjoy critical acclaim as a writer of distinction.

## Conclusion

Throughout his lifetime, Upton Sinclair had been making tests of Big Business practices in America. In every case, he found the combined forces of capitalism on the side of privilege and exploitation, almost nowhere on the side of democratic principles. Sinclair put all of this moral outrage at the failure of capitalism into a remarkable series of books, called,

collectively, The Dead Hand series. Although the series was one of the first comprehensive indictment of American capitalism, it failed to rally a mass audience. There are several reasons one could offer: the historical factors of the 1920's; Sinclair's unfortunate reputation as an eccentric; and the decline of the interest in the muckraking movement.

Yet, studying Sinclair's place in the rhetorical tapestry of the muckraking movement is significant and illumination . Although non successful, Griffin would suggest that Sinclair's rhetorical strivings are yet important. In fact, Griffin concluded his 1980 Central States Speech Journal article with the hope that movement studies scholarship would not only continue but that the speech communication community would welcome a variety of approaches , descriptions of movements, and methodologies.

At times, though, Griffin laments that studying a movement may seem like striving after the wind. It is not worthwhile, Griffin quotes Thoreau "to go round the world to count the cats of Zanzibar." But, counting cats may indeed yet be worthwhile at least for the critic, if not for the cat. "How do we know what is to be found if those inclined to count cats do not make the venture? They should not be discouraged."[40]

The Dead Hand series was only a part of Sinclair's long and significant personal odyssey. Never discouraged, his impulse to muckrake grew out of deep religious, philosophical, and psychological needs to cast out, where possible, the corruption that prevented humankind from being freed from the dead hand of capitalism. In a modern Pilgrim's Progress, Sinclair found his fulfillment not in the magnitude of his success but in the redemption of socialism.

While success often eluded him, Sinclair, by the fury of his ardor and the sheer volume of his writings, managed often to disturb thecomplacency of many. In much of his reformist writings, the surety of his mission matched the clarity of his nostrums.

Out of his passion and compassion, Sinclair was always eager for an answer, a Grand Solution. His pursuit of it often exposed him to ridicule and his eccentric reputation made it easy for the American people to

dismiss him as a serious writer. Fighting so many causes with so few victories, Sinclair has to be admired at least for his steadfastness, having survived so many failures, drawing new hope from defeat as most others do from victory. Few people in history have been more actively optimistic in the pursuit of their goals.

In 1933, Sinclair partly explained the motivating source of his reformist impulses: "Setting aside questions of fact, and considering merely those of psychology, it is obvious that a man who goes out to do battle in the world, convinced that he has God behind him, guiding his destiny, that man will be a more formidable foe that one who relies upon his strength alone." [41] If such a faith were enough, Sinclair would indeed have been a formidable foe. Unfortunately, faith was not enough.

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## Notes

[1]Granville Hicks, "The Survival of Upton Sinclair", College English, IV [January, 1943], 215.

[2]Lewis A. Fretz, "Upton Sinclair: The Don Quixote of American Reform," Diss. Stanford University 1970, p. 87.

[3]Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXVII, 1952, p. 185.

[4]Leland M. Griffin, "On Studying Movements," Central States Speech Journal, [Winter, 1980], p. 230 - 231.

[5]Upton Sinclair, The Profits of Religion: An Essay in Economic Interpretation. Pasadena, California: Published By The Author, 1918, pp. 295-296.

[6] for a fuller analysis see John Kares Smith, "Upton Sinclair and the Celestial Crown: the Rhetoric of The Dead Hand series," Diss. Northwestern University, 1974.

[7]Fretz, p. 87.

[8]B.P.H. Review of Mammonart, by Upton Sinclair, Boston Transcript, March 28, 1925, p. 10.

[9]Betty Yorburg, Utopia and Reality: A Collective Portrait of Americanm Socialists. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 70.

[10] Lynda Ann Beltz, "Preachers of Social Discontent: the Rhetoric of the Muckrakers," Diss. Indiana University, 1968. For an interesting discussion of the contemporary impact of the muckraking movement, see Philip F. Lawler, The Alternative Influence: The Impact of Investigative Reporting Groups on America's Media. New York: University Press of America, 1984, especially pp. 35 - 48.

[11]Harvey Swados, Ed. Years of Conscience: The Muckrakers. New York:World Publishing Company, 1962, p. 9.

[12] "King of the Muckrakers," Newsweek, 72, December 9, 1968, p. 34, 39.

[13]Beltz, p. 262.

[14]Daniel Bell, "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States," in D. D. Egbert and Stow Persons, Eds., Socialism in American Life, I, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952, pp. 302.

[15]Louis Filler, "The Muckrakers: In Flower and Failure," in Herbert Shapiro, Ed., The Muckrakers and American Society. Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1968 , p. 91.

[16]Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969, p. 14.

[17]Vernon Louis Parrington. The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America. New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1930, pp. 406- 407.

[18]For another explication of a critical method of examining rhetorical movements, see James Chesebro and Caroline Hamsher. Orientations to Public Communication . Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1976.

[19]Robert S. Cathcart, " New Approaches to the Study of Movements; Defining Movements Rhetorically," Western Speech, 36 [Spring, 1972], pp. 82-88.

[20]Charles Stewart, Craig Smith and Robert E. Denton. Persuasion and Social Movements. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1984.

[21] See Stewart, Smith, Denton, pp. 37 - 50.

[22]Arthur and Lila Weinberg, Eds. The Muckrakers. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1964.

[23] Weinbergs, p. xvi.

[24] See Stewart, Smith, Denton, pp. 46 - 47.

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[27]Eric F. Goldman. Rendezvous With Destiny. New York: Vintage Books, 1956, p. 223.

[28]Goldman, p. 224.

[29] quoted in William L. Rivers, The Other Government: Power and the Washington Media. New York: Universe Books, 1976, p. 142.

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[31]Quoted in Upton Sinclair, The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair. London: W. H. Allen, 1963, p. 131.

[32]Jack London. Letter to Appeal to Reason, November 18, 1905.

[33]Upton Sinclair, "Perfect Health," published in The Fasting Cure. New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1911 , p. 25.

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[35]Arnold F. Biella, "Upton Sinclair: Crusader," Diss. Stanford University, 1954, p. 135.

[36]Upton Sinclair," "The Laying On Of Hands," Hearst's International Magazine, XXV [April, 1914], 467 - 476.

[37]Quoted in Biella, "Upton Sinclair: Crusader," pp. 213-214.

[38]Upton Sinclair, "The House of Wonder," Pearson's Magazine, XLVIII [June, 1922], 9 - 17.

[39]In the period 1901 until 1922, Sinclair had written twenty-one novels, edited an anthology of radical literature, written several plays, edited and published his own magazine,taken part in several protest movements, ran for several political offices as a Socialist, went on many lecture tours and wrote scores of letters to the editor, articles, and broadsides.

[40] Leland M. Griffin, "On Studying Movements," Central States Speech Journal, [Winter, 1980], p.232.

[41] Upton Sinclair. Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox. Los Angeles: Published By The Author, 1933, p. 11.